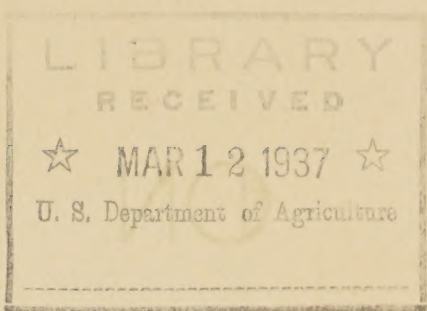


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U S D A ORGANIZER

American Federation
of
Government Employees

Lodge 31

A.F.G.E.

Affiliated with
American Federation
of Labor

Vol. 2, No. 2

March, 1937

DO YOU EXPECT A PROMOTION?

As it is now set up, the government service offers no assurance that deserving employees will be advanced in their jobs. Efficiency, ability, length of service are not the common criteria which determine the rise of the average employee to a higher grade. Circumstances, such as fortuitous job openings, personal favoritism, political influence, etc. very often are the deciding factors in employee advancement. The injustices are so glaring that officials themselves have spoken out against them and suggested wide sweeping reforms. But thus far there is no real evidence that any such reforms will be carried out. The question is, Can we as employees do anything about these existing injustices? If so, what?

Agriculture Lodge #31, A.F.G.E., has answered this question in the nature of a workable Promotions and Vacancy Agreement which it is presenting in your behalf to the Administration. Briefly, the agreement provides for the following:

1. When vacancies occur within the Department of Agriculture, it shall be mandatory that they be filled from within the personnel by promotion, whenever possible; such promotions to be made on the basis of seniority, efficiency and ability.

2. That every opportunity be given those already employed within the Department to learn of such vacancies and to apply for them before new people are recruited from the Civil Service Commission.

3. That, in addition to the posting of vacancies, a departmental Transfer Agency be set up to facilitate the workings of this agreement and also to assist in the adjustment of personnel problems.

Promotion agreements have been obtained by unions in other government departments where employees gave their unstinting cooperation. Lodge #31 will be able to secure such an agreement if you and you and you will get behind it and lend your support. Organized strength is needed in order to effect our program. JOIN THE UNION TODAY!

If you approve of the Promotions Agreement outlined above, or if you have any suggestions concerning it, let us hear from you! Address your letters to the editor, Della Cogan, Room 2754. We want your active support!

ON THE LABOR FRONT

LA FOLLETTE COMMITTEE EXPOSES LABOR SPIES

The revelations made by the La Follette Subcommittee investigating violations of civil liberties become more, not less, shocking. In the sphere of labor espionage and strike-breaking there has been divulged information which casts into question the repeated professions of good intentions towards labor made by nominally respectable employers and employer groups. The indiscriminate hiring of ex-convicts and thugs and the generally unscrupulous endeavors to destroy employee organizations warrants hesitation in according to capital the respect which it has always contended is its just due.

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AUTOMOBILE WORKERS UNION GAINS RECOGNITION

At noon of February 11, 1937, the first major labor struggle in the automobile industry was settled. For the first time in its history the General Motors Corporation signed a national agreement with a labor organization. By the terms of the settlement, General Motors undertook to recognize the United Automobile Workers of America as the bargaining agent for its members; to refrain for six months from consultation on "matters of general corporation policy" with any other organization from the twenty plants in which the strike took place; to commence negotiations with the union on questions of wages, hours of labor, "speed-up," and general working conditions.

That the negotiations were carried on with executive officers of the corporation represents a retreat by it from the position which it has hitherto held, that labor grievances were to be settled by conference with individual plant superintendents, and is a de facto recognition of the union.

SUPREME COURT TESTS LABOR LAW

Before a packed courtroom, on February 9, 1937, arguments were commenced in cases before the Supreme Court to test the validity of the National Labor Relations Act. In suit brought by the Associated Press to compel the rescinding of an order of the National Labor Relations Board directing the reinstatement of Morris Watson, an editorial employee, apparently discharged for union activity, the Act was attacked as an infringement on the freedom of the press and as an instrument to impose the closed shop upon industry.

In defense, the government contended that a labor dispute in the newspaper publishing industry was of such a character as to threaten to impede seriously the flow of interstate commerce and that its regulation therefore was within Congressional purview.

The National Labor Relations Act is one of the most significant pieces of legislation passed in the last half dozen sessions of Congress. It does not seek to compel capital to agree to anything contrary to its will. It compels merely consultation with representatives of a majority of the workers, upon the basis of the belief that conference must be the first step to settlement, and with the intent of introducing some element of order into labor industrial relations.

* * * *

THE WORKERS ALLIANCE

The recent demonstration in Washington by the Workers Alliance of America accomplished at least one effect. It aroused the inquiry generally, "What is the Workers Alliance?"

In the sphere of labor organization the Workers Alliance plays a unique part. Composed of the unemployed and (Continued on page 4, second column)

CENTRAL LABOR UNION CALLS CONFERENCE FOR LOWER RENTS AND BETTER HOUSING

For the past two years the Washington Central Labor Union has endeavored to secure the passage of legislation designed to provide adequate housing for the citizens of Washington and to stop the constant rise of rents. Despite extensive activities of the Central Labor Union Committee last year, the Ellenbogen Rent Control Bill failed of passage in the House of Representatives and Congress did nothing to provide a program of construction to ease the shortage which has grown constantly during the past twenty years.

Because of the experience during the last two years, organized labor has come to the realization that, in order to effect any improvement in the present deplorable housing situation, it must organize a permanent city-wide labor league to cope with this problem. To this end, the Central Labor Union, speaking for over 100,000 organized workers in the District, has issued a call to a conference addressed to all affiliated local unions. It is expected that prominent members of Congress will speak in support of the C.L.U. program at this meeting.

The Central Labor Union will present for consideration at this conference the following four-point program, unanimously adopted by the Central body:

1. Rent Control.
 - a. Appointment of a commission by the President which would have power to lower exorbitant rents.
 - b. Rents to be frozen as of January 1, 1935, no unjustifiable increases.
2. Creation of a D.C. Housing Authority to construct adequate low cost housing (all labor to be paid prevailing union wages).
3. Enforcement and enactment, if necessary, of adequate sanitation, health and fire regulations.
4. Establishment of a tenant-landlord court to settle disputes.

Lodge #31 is sending two delegates to this conference and other government agencies, as well as unions from the building, printing and service trades have elected delegates. You, as rent payers, have been gorged long enough. Landlords and real estate agents have been forcing you to live in quarters too small and badly in need of repair. The conference is open to the public.

PLACE: TYPOGRAPHICAL TEMPLE, 423 G STREET, N.W.

DATE: MARCH 8, 1937.

COME AND SUPPORT THE FIGHT FOR IMPROVED HOUSING!

THE BOARD OF APPEALS

Bills have recently been introduced into Congress calling for the creation of an impartial Board of Appeals for government employees. At present there is no such board to which a government employee who has been discriminated against or unfairly dismissed can appeal.

Suggestions have been made for the board to consist of Civil Service Commission officials. But would such a board adequately represent the interests of government employees? Lodge #31 takes the stand that in order for a board of appeals to be, in effect, impartial, it should consist of equal representation of government employee groups and government official groups.

To the Editor:

I want to congratulate the editorial staff of the ORGANIZER on the January-February issue, particularly in regard to the make-up of the paper, the book review, and the statement regarding the ousted lodges. I, personally, would have preferred a statement of the basic issues involved in the General Motors strike. In matters of this kind I feel that the ORGANIZER can be of particular value to its readers, since a large part of the news articles in the daily press are written with an anti-labor bias. I was sorry to see the labor notes discontinued as I feel the ORGANIZER should serve the purpose of bringing us in closer touch with the general labor movement.

This paper should be the vocal point for all people in the Department interested in labor problems. I wish to offer my help in any way I can, not only to the editorial staff, but also to the circulation committee.

E. L. WARREN

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STEEL SURVEY RECOMMENDS UNIONIZATION

When the C. I. O. was formed it was tacitly understood that one of the major aims was the organization of the workers in the steel industry.

Hence it is interesting to note (and perhaps a little surprising) that the conservative University of Pittsburgh Bureau of Business Research has publicly recommended the same program as the Committee for Industrial Organization is pursuing.

These unbiased academic investigators have advocated (1) the organization of steel workers into vertical unions such as the C. I. O. is building rather than craft organizations; (2) that collective bargaining be done on a national rather than plant basis; and (3) democratic unions rather than company unions which do not adequately represent the workers.

* * * * *

AMERICAN YOUTH VISITS WASHINGTON

Terming the American Youth Act a "charter of economic rights for American youth," Mr. Abbott Simon, national legislative director of the American Youth Congress, speaking before Lodge #31 on February 4 said, "The American Youth Act has been drafted with the design of resolving the pressing economic problems which face the young people of America. Five million people between the ages of 16 and 25, one-fourth of an entire generation, are without jobs and without school. This deplorable condition manifests itself in maleducation, in physical degeneration, in an increasingly costly wave of crime, and in general demoralization. The Act offers what is now a vitally necessary 'young-age security'".

On the weekend of February 19 there appeared in Washington a pilgrimage of several thousand young people, come to offer testimony as to the seriousness of their plight and to present to the President petitions signed by more than a million persons urging the passage of the Youth Act.

Lodge #31 has endorsed the American Youth Act.

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(Continued from page 2)

relief workers--those who merely aspire to a place among the ranks of labor--its primary objective is to secure improved standards of relief and more favorable conditions of employment on public works projects.

But in accomplishing this aim, it protects the regular body of labor from the demoralizing effects of low relief standards. Wage and hour gains which labor unions achieve are exceedingly prevarious so long as there exists a fluent labor supply which is willing to grasp at any straw of security.

Any organization of the unemployed designed to effect a raise of relief standards merits the support of labor groups.

* * * * *

OVERTIME SURVEY DISCLOSES ABUSES

Pursuant to the Act of March 14, 1936, providing for the definition of regular and uniform hours of duty and for a six months survey of overtime in the various government establishments, the Civil Service Committee on Hours and Duties, made up of representatives of the many executive branches, has finally brought forth a report.

Although hardly surprising to the average government employee, the semi-astronomical figures involved in the report should once and for all disabuse the non-government worker of many notions regarding "pampered" government employees.

To begin with, we find that over 75,000 persons worked overtime more than 13,000,000 hours without receiving the more than \$10,000,000 that they had earned in the six months of the survey. In other words, during those six months each employee working overtime earned an average of 25 days leave or \$130 that he did not receive. Viewed from another angle, approximately 13,000 additional workers would be required to perform the overtime work during regular hours.

(Continued next column)

Answers to last issue's
cross word
puzzle

	B	E		O	A	R		I	S	
7	S	I		O	R	G	A	N		9
11	E	T	A			R			12	E
	C			13	U	N	I	O	N	
14	U	R	N			C		16	L	17
18	R	A			19	M	U	M		21
22	I	T		23	V	I	T	A	L	24
	T				25	N	U	N		
26	Y	E		28	M	E	R	I	T	29
	30	O	F		31	S	E	A		32

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ACTING EDITOR NELLIE SHAFFER

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Simon Rottenberg Louis Matosoff

The Department of Agriculture, which has the reputation in government circles of being good to its employees, showed the heaviest overtime burden of any Federal agency during the six months covered by the Civil Service Commission's report. Here are some of the figures for the period in question:

Forest Service	253,715 hrs.
Soil Conservation	164,446 hrs.
Weather Bureau	84,000 hrs.
Bur. of Animal Industry	53,774 hrs.
Agricultural Economics	45,569 hrs.
Agric. Adjust. Admin.	33,544 hrs.

The necessary conclusions are that overtime is a normal and not an emergency condition, since it continues month after month and year after year; that it is unprogressive, since thousands of employees are being released to join the ranks of the some 9,000,000 unemployed while overtime continues; that it is inefficient, since it lowers the health and ability of the over-worked employee; and that an early remedy for the situation must be sought and fought for by all employee groups.

LODGE 31 MEETS

While Congress is in session, Lodge 31 meets on the first and third Thursdays of each month. The next meeting will be held on Mar. 18 in Room 2050, South Building, at 8:00 p.m.

JOIN LODGE 31
TODAY

JOIN LODGE 31 TODAY

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* Name Date *
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* Bureau Bldg. *
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* Room No. Office Phone No. *
*
* Initiation Fee \$1.00 *
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Fill out this blank and send it in to C. C. Warren, Room
2760, South Building, D. of A.

To the Editor:

The time seems auspicious, at last, for a merited upward revision of salaries in the Federal service. Political scientists have long advocated that government set an example to industry in the matter of rates of pay for unskilled and semi-skilled workers. In line with this policy, and in view of increased prices and higher living costs, salary increases in the lower brackets of the Civil Service are more than justified.

The McCarran bill deserves the support of the A.F.G.E. Undoubtedly the A.F.G.E. will support the \$1500 minimum wage as it is included in its platform. However, the A.F.G.E. and its membership should remember that attainment of minimum wage rates does not represent utopia. Real wages, or purchasing power, may be vastly reduced through inflation and the consequent increased price level. The really fair plan involves salaries adjusted to changes in the general price level.

Yours truly,
"An Employee"

Ed. Note: The A.F.G.E. has strongly endorsed many features of the McCarran Bill but has called attention to certain clauses of that bill which might have the effect of introducing a vicious speed-up system in Government em-

ploy. It warns specifically against Sections 8 and 9 which propose the setting up of a system of recording the quantity and quality of work performed by each employee whereby the Civil Service Commission will be able to set a standard of performance for each classification, and (note this) if for any period of six months an employee fails to maintain the minimum standard of performance fixed by the Commission, he shall be demoted or dropped from the service.

The A.F.G.E. is opposed to the establishment of a speed-up system whereby every government employee would have to fight competitively for his job.

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ALL ABOUT LABOR ESPIONAGE

Again proving that truth is stranger than fiction--at the last meeting of Lodge 31 Ralph D. Winstead, former investigator for the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee, led us down into the underworld of labor espionage and related, in whimsical vein, the incredible activities in large industrial concerns of "stool-pigeons", "undercover" and "street" operatives, "finks" and described all the tricks and guises of these "labor-harmony insurance" concerns.